GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/11
Core Physical Geography

Key messages

Comparison was an important part of **Question 2(b)**. However, many candidates made statements that were only indirectly comparative. The comparative element needs to be made clear in these types of question.

Producing an accurate sketch is a key geographical skill. Many candidates produced accurate sketches of Fig. 3.1, but some candidates confused a sketch with a cross-sectional diagram.

Some geographical misconceptions were evident in some candidates' responses, so teachers need to make sure that these are addressed in students' learning.

Candidates should ensure that they are including enough development in their answers and/or ensuring they have a range of ideas to access the full marks, as required in **Questions 2(c)** and **3(c)**. Whilst there were some good responses in these questions, many lacked sufficient detail. Candidates should use the mark allocations shown on the paper. These indicate the number of marks available and often suggest how many points are needed. If a candidate has only a few specific points, they should aim to develop these with more detail.

Defining terms is often a requirement of the examination, as in **Questions 4(a)(i)**, **5(a)(i)** and **6(a)(i)**, and answers should be concise. Some candidates wrote long descriptions about the topic but did not provide a clear definition.

Assessment and evaluation are essential parts of answers to **Section B** questions. Previous reports have noted that some candidates show strong factual knowledge but do not include evaluation in their response. The best answers include evaluation throughout the main text rather than adding a short conclusion at the end. All the essay questions (**Question 4(c)**, **5(c)**, and **6(c)**) require evaluation or assessment to reach Levels 3 and 4. The most successful responses were detailed and showed strong understanding.

In **Section B**, many candidates used detailed examples to support their responses. However, simple place names are not very effective. A detailed case study is often better and many good examples were seen in **Question 6(c)**. Any diagrams used should be detailed, accurate and relevant to the question being answered.

General comments

There was a wide range of responses in terms of knowledge and understanding in this examination. Candidates were generally well prepared for the examination, and this was shown in the quality of many answers. There were very few rubric errors, and most candidates managed their time effectively.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Hydrology and fluvial geomorphology

Question 1

© 2025

(a) This question asked candidates to describe the distribution of areas above the flood threshold and not below it. Some candidates did not realise that Fig. 1.2 also related to the question so there was some confusion over borders and locations of geographical features in Nigeria.

(b) In some answers there was a repetition in ideas. Two different ideas were needed.

(c) Many candidates just named a flood reduction strategy, but the question required an explanation.

Atmosphere and weather

Question 2

(a) Many candidates incorrectly answered asphalt.

(b) In this question some element of comparison was needed. Many candidates gave separate descriptive statements.

(c) Overall, answers to this question were weak. In a few answers there was incorrect mention of the enhanced greenhouse effect which is not relevant on this scale. Misconceptions about the ozone layer were evident in some responses. Many candidates focussed on temperature, which is only one aspect of the climate of an urban area that can be affected by human activity.

Rocks and weathering

Question 3

(a) Most candidates were able to answer this correctly.

(b) In this question there were some quite poor sketches of the mass movements with very few candidates drawing what was shown in the image. There were a lot of cross profiles.

(c) Most candidates were able to suggest two reasons for the mass movement but in some responses there was repetition between ideas.

Section B

Hydrology and fluvial geomorphology

Question 4

(a) (i) Throughfall was not as well understood as interception.

(ii) This question was not well answered. Many candidates did not have a proper understanding of how springs are formed.

(b) Most responses showed a weak knowledge of delta formation.

(c) There were some good answers to this question. However, a significant number of candidates did not answer the question that was presented and instead described the impacts of flooding case studies they had learned.

Atmosphere and weather

Question 5

(a) (i) Longwave radiation was not as well understood as condensation.

(ii) Some candidates were able to explain why an area might experience seasonal variations in atmospheric pressure, but most answers lacked development or breadth of ideas.

(b) Some candidates focussed too much on the causes of the enhanced greenhouse effect rather than the evidence. There was some mention of the ozone layer in answers which is not relevant to the question. The enhanced greenhouse effect was often confused with the greenhouse effect.

© 2025

(c) The causes of fog were not well understood by many candidates. Many candidates were able to explain how radiation cooling forms fog but did not evaluate other causes.

Rocks and weathering

Question 6

(a) (i) Freeze–thaw weathering was well understood by many candidates. Some candidates did not develop their definitions of salt crystal growth.

(ii) Many candidates confused volcanic island arcs with hotspots.

(b) Very few candidates understood how heaves and flows occurred. Most candidates understood that flows involved water, but heaves were not well understood.

(c) There were some good responses to this question. Examples were used effectively to support ideas. Some ideas were more descriptive rather than evaluative.

© 2025

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/12
Core Physical Geography

Key messages

A variety of data was presented in ***Section A*** and this included graphs, maps and diagrams. All three resources were straightforward and caused few problems in interpretation. If candidates did not score well, it was because they misinterpreted the demands of the question, not the resource itself. This was particularly apparent in **Question 3(b)** where candidates had to compare the patterns of earthquakes between the four diagrams. Many just described the pattern of earthquakes in each diagram separately. Candidates need to read the command words in the question carefully.

The use of illustrative sketch maps and diagrams continues to be limited. They can provide clarity and essential detail. Many candidates did make a good attempt to illustrate the formation of point bars in **Question 4(a)(ii)** however diagrams in **Question 4(c)** to show where braiding occurs would have been equally as useful.

The use of examples continues to be a key element, particularly in ***Section B***. Examples need to include relevant detail to be effective and not just a place name. **Question 4(c)** and **6(c)** required specific reference to examples in their response.

In ***Section B*** all the essay questions (**Question 4(c)**, **5(c)**, and **6(c)**) require evaluation or assessment to reach Levels 3 and 4. This is a crucial part of the answer but needs emphasising. Although many understand what is required, this essential element is often addressed at the end of the examination when time is limited. The most successful answers are often those which incorporate evaluative considerations into the main discussion of the essay.

General comments

Candidates generally displayed a good understanding of the relevant geographical concepts. Most seemed well prepared for the examination and the quality of many of the answers was very good. Many answers were thoughtful and logical with an impressive level of detail, though care must always be taken to ensure it is relevant to the question.

There were very few rubric errors in the way of answering too many or too few questions, but care should be taken in the correct numbering of questions. Planning in terms of time allocation was generally effective, though as stated above, the evaluation aspect of essay questions needed more emphasis in some instances.

It was particularly good to see a wider range of questions being answered in ***Section B***. Usually, **Question 4** is by far the most popular response, but this year **Question 6** was equally as popular, and many candidates scored well on it.

The concept of ‘pattern’ continues to cause difficulties. There is a tendency to simply locate areas, such as in **Question 2(b)**, where the distribution of temperature needed to be considered across the whole of the map, rather than picking out specific places to comment.

© 2025

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Hydrology and fluvial geomorphology

Question 1

(a) A range of approaches could be taken with this question, and both were given credit. Candidates could comment on the relationship of land use between each graph, and/or the relationship of land use within the graph. However, whichever approach was used, there had to be clear comment on how the land use affected flood risk. Simply quoting the data shown in each pie chart did not gain marks.

(b) Most candidates answered this well, often referring back to the pie charts in **part (a)**. This was not essential to answer the question but clearly some candidates found it useful to help structure their response. Some candidates mistakenly identified deforestation as a land use.

(c) Most candidates scored well in this question. They knew a variety of hard engineering methods and were able to clearly explain how they prevented flooding. Some candidates incorrectly wrote about soft engineering methods.

Atmosphere and weather

Question 2

(a) The majority of candidates were able to correctly state the temperature, but they must be reminded about the need to also give the units – in this case °C.

(b) Describing patterns of distribution continues to cause problems for many candidates. Too often they simply described the map by quoting isolated data points throughout. Better responses started off by describing the main feature of the distribution – in this case higher temperatures in the north and lower temperatures in the south, and then moved on to describe variations, and anomalies, backed up with reference to specific points on the map.

(c) This question required candidates to explain variations of temperature within an urban area, but many candidates wrote about the difference between rural and urban. Some responses also wrote about urban heat islands and global warming. Those that did focus their response within an urban area scored reasonably well, but needed to explain why the temperatures varied, not just describe the variation.

Rocks and weathering

Question 3

(a) Most candidates correctly identified the type of plate boundary.

(b) Some candidates clearly understood the requirements of this question and made clear comparative statements about the four diagrams. However, many candidates just described one diagram after the other with no comparison being made, and some tried to explain the reasons for the varying plate boundaries.

(c) This question was generally not answered well. A common error seen was explaining the pattern in all four diagrams, instead of just in diagram B as required by the question. Many candidates also just described the pattern and did not link their explanation to how the plates were moving at the boundary.

© 2025

Section B

Hydrology and fluvial geomorphology

Question 4

(a) (i) Most candidates had a clear understanding of the process of traction and developed their response enough to gain at least two marks.

(ii) This question was generally done quite well, showing a clear understanding of how erosion and deposition vary across a meandering river channel. Although not a requirement of the response, drawing a diagram to illustrate the position of the point bar helped clarify some answers.

(b) This question proved to be difficult for many candidates. The shape of drainage basins was not always understood and consequently linkages to discharge and the storm hydrograph were not easily explained. Candidates were unsure of the difference between elongated and circular, and often brought in irrelevant details like rock type, vegetation, number of tributaries, etc. Relief often came in as an interpretation for shape, and several candidates combined size and shape, so wrote about 'large, circular' basins. Candidates were better at explaining how size affected the storm hydrograph. Many candidates described how the shape of the storm hydrograph varied but did not explain why it varied.

(c) Detail on the occurrence and formation of braided channels was limited in many responses. There was confusion of braided channels with point bars, and many had little understanding of the role of velocity – or any other factors – in the formation of braided river channels. This made evaluation difficult. Even when the role of deposition was discussed, there was limited explanation that this is needed for eyots to form which actually cause the river to become braided. Diagrams would have helped in the development of this response.

Atmosphere and weather

Question 5

(a) (i) Most candidates were able to describe what condensation was but there was some confusion over the sequences in the process.

(ii) Some candidates wrote good ideas but many had a weak understanding of what a radiation deficit actually was, and simply wrote about albedo rates, which whilst an important part of it, is not the only reason.

(b) Candidates were clearly knowledgeable about global warming and wrote a lot about its impacts. However, the question was about atmospheric impacts so parts of many of the responses were not creditable. Some candidates wrote a lot about causes of global warming, which again, was not creditable.

(c) There were some very good responses to this question from some candidates. However, many candidates did not appreciate that the diurnal energy budget is made up of a nighttime energy budget and a daytime energy budget. They tended to just focus on the daytime budget, so while the points they made about albedo were relevant to this budget, many ignored the lack of albedo in the nighttime budget and the effect this has on the relative importance of factors affecting the diurnal budget. Many candidates also wrote about global energy budget instead.

Rocks and weathering

Question 6

(a) (i) A good response from most candidates showing clear knowledge and understanding.

(ii) Most candidates did well in this question. If there was confusion it occurred with writing about the wrong type of plate boundary.

© 2025

(b) Responses to this question were generally good with some excellent detailed examples. Answers contained a range of human activities that can cause slope instability, and the better responses went into detail as to how the sheer strength and sheer stress of the slope were affected.

(c) There were some excellent, detailed answers to this question with clear understanding of the role of temperature in physical weathering and the role of rainfall in chemical weathering, with good exemplification of specific weathering processes. Better answers were also aware that temperature and rainfall affect both types of weathering and were able to consider the role of other factors such as rock type and structure as well as vegetation.

© 2025

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/13
Core Physical Geography

Key messages

Candidates need to be confident in interpreting a wide range of graphs and charts. There was some good specific reference to the figures provided. However, some candidates struggled to interpret Fig. 1.1 and Fig. 2.1 in **Questions 1** and **2** and therefore did not calculate the difference in discharge between the 1.5-year flood recurrence interval and the 10-year flood recurrence interval or read the maximum negative difference from the 1901–2000 average or years correctly.

Producing an accurate sketch is a key geographical skill. Many candidates produced accurate sketches of Fig. 3.1, but some candidates confused a sketch with a cross-sectional diagram.

Some geographical misconceptions were evident in some candidates' responses, so teachers need to make sure that these are addressed in students' learning.

Candidates should ensure that they are including enough development in their answers and/or ensuring they have a range of ideas to access the full marks, as required in **Questions 1(c)** and **2(c)**. Whilst there were some good responses in these questions, not all included sufficient detail. Candidates should use the mark allocations shown on the paper. These indicate the number of marks available and often suggest how many points are needed. If a candidate has only a few specific points, they should aim to develop these with more detail.

Defining terms or describing processes is often a requirement of the examination, as in **Questions 4(a)(i)** and **6(a)(i)**, and answers should be concise. Some candidates wrote long descriptions about the topic but did not provide a clear definition.

Assessment and evaluation are essential parts of answers to **Section B** questions. Previous reports have noted that some candidates show strong factual knowledge but do not include evaluation in their response. The best answers include evaluation throughout the main text rather than adding a short conclusion at the end. All the essay questions (**Question 4(c)**, **5(c)**, and **6(c)**) require evaluation or assessment to reach Levels 3 and 4. The most successful responses were detailed and showed strong understanding.

In **Section B**, many candidates used detailed examples to support their responses. However, simple place names are not very effective. A detailed case study is often better and many good examples were seen in **Question 5(c)**. Sketch maps and diagrams can often enhance answers, and there were some good sketches and diagrams drawn for **Questions 4(b)**, **5(a)(ii)**, **5(b), 6(a)(i)** and **6(b)**. Any diagrams used should be detailed, accurate and relevant to the question being answered.

General comments

The examination produced a varied range of responses in terms of knowledge and understanding. There were a number of excellent responses to some questions.

There were some rubric errors. Overall, time management during the exam was generally effective. Most candidates answered the questions in the sequence presented on the paper. However, this approach can sometimes result in limited time for the final questions, which are typically in **Section B**. Whilst the importance of evaluation has already been highlighted under Key messages, it is worth reiterating that a thoughtful and well-structured evaluation is essential for achieving high marks. The main challenge arises when insufficient time is left at the end of the exam to produce a meaningful and comprehensive assessment.

© 2025

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Hydrology and fluvial geomorphology

Question 1

(a) Some candidates did not read Fig. 1.1 correctly and therefore came to the wrong answer.

(b) Overall, this question was answered well. Responses that included general descriptive statements about the graph did not gain credit. This question needed the overall pattern of discharge to be described over the three-year period.

(c) Some candidates developed points, getting one mark for a point and a second mark for a development. Many candidates achieved four marks this way but many did not add a final point for full marks.

Atmosphere and weather

Question 2

(a) This question was answered correctly by many candidates.

(b) Overall, this question was answered well. However, some candidates started to explain the differences in global average surface temperatures which was not necessary for this question.

(c) Some candidates wrote about the greenhouse effect instead of the enhanced greenhouse effect when attempting to explain the pattern of differences in global average surface temperatures between 1980 and 2022. There was a misconception about the ozone layer in many candidates' responses.

Rocks and weathering

Question 3

(a) Most candidates were able to draw an accurate sketch of the weathered rock shown in Fig. 3.1. Cross profiles and weathering sequences were not appropriate.

(b) Freeze–thaw was a common answer but not appropriate as the rock clearly exhibits signs of exfoliation in the form of peeling layers. Similarly, there was no evidence of salt crystal growth or pressure release (dilatation).

(c) This question was answered well by candidates with many achieving full marks.

Section B

Hydrology and fluvial geomorphology

Question 4

(a) (i) Overall, this question was answered well. It is worth highlighting that stemflow is the movement of water down the stem/trunk not through or in it.

(ii) Many candidates answered this question on the formation of river levées well.

(b) There were some good responses to this question. The best answers linked the storm hydrograph shape with flows/transfers in the drainage basin.

(c) Responses to this question were generally weaker. Wetland and riverbank conservation was not well understood by many candidates.

© 2025

Atmosphere and weather

Question 5

(a) (i) Many candidates produced developed answers to this question.

(ii) There were many good answers to this question but some candidates needed to include longwave radiation in their response.

(b) Many candidates used diagrams to support their answers in this question. These responses were usually effective.

(c) There were some good answers to this question but reference to greenhouse gases and the enhanced greenhouse effect were not relevant on this scale.

Rocks and weathering

Question 6

(a) (i) Overall, this question was answered well. In some responses there was confusion about which tectonic plate types are involved in sea floor spreading.

(ii) Sheetwash was not well understood by many candidates.

(b) Similar to **(a)(i)** there was some confusion about which tectonic plate types were involved in the formation of volcanic island arcs.

(c) There was some good evaluation from candidates on the role of water in causing mass movements, but many candidates did not consider other factors responsible for causing mass movements.

© 2025

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/21
Core Human Geography

Key messages

- The mark allocation not only indicates the range of points expected but also the time that should be spent on that section. Responses consisting of two simple statements for a 4-mark question are unlikely to achieve full marks. Often candidates wrote excessively for 2 marks in **Questions 1(b)** and **2(b)**.

- The 15 mark part **(c)** in ***Section B*** is worth 25 per cent of the total marks and is often the key discriminator as it is an evaluation. Candidates should leave sufficient time to explain their ideas clearly.

- When a question asks for two aspects such as **Questions 1(b), 2(b)** and **3(b)** it is unnecessary to give more than the required number. The best ideas will be marked, but additional points waste time.

- Where questions require a specific context such as HICs in **Questions 5(b) and 5(c),** answers must relate to this context. Generic answers or answers that use examples from LICs/MICs will not be able to access the full mark range.

- Candidates should be encouraged to use specific terms, and to avoid using generalised terms such as *'standard of living*' or *'infrastructure'* without clarifying what they include.

- Case studies and examples are required to access the higher levels of marks in many questions. Examples should be recognisable and specific, including accurate facts which are place specific. Examples in name only, such as '*e.g. Florida'* do not add much to an answer. Examples should be recent, from within the lifetime of the candidates. Candidates should be encouraged to include detail that clearly gives a 'sense of place' such as specific place names, location, description or statistics.

- Some responses included generalised and inaccurate statements. These should be qualified. Candidates should avoid using spurious data to support their points.

- Good case study knowledge is needed, especially in ***Section B***, but it must be appropriately applied to the question by selecting relevant information. Some candidates simply repeated everything they had memorised about an example they had studied, so some responses lacked focus.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Population

Question 1

(a) (i) Almost all candidates could extract the figure 18 from the graph, but a sizeable number did not add the units of births per 1000 people to make it a creditworthy answer.

(ii) The main feature of the question that candidates needed to note was that it was looking for changes over time not points in time. The best answers quoted both figures and years to compose an answer made up of several features of change in the graph. A feature of weaker answers was to comment on the line changing to 'dotted' without noticing that at that point it became a prediction.

© 2025

(b) The command word 'suggest' gave candidates opportunity to refer to a wide range of possibilities. This question was well answered with most responses showing a grasp of the potential reasons. A common error was a focus on pro-natalist policies which may lead to higher birth rates but not high rates (in real world examples) as stated in the question.

(c) Most candidates had sufficient knowledge to give reasons to start to explain this question, but many did not expand on their initial reason to gain all the available marks.

Migration

Question 2

(a) Most candidates were able to identify differences between the continents, however many responses just listed the figures for each continent without adding comparative comments. The best responses noted the subtle differences in the shape of the graphs, such as the convex shape for North America and the dip in the trend for Africa in the middle of the time covered. Very few identified that whilst actual numbers varied significantly, the percentage increase was similar for all continents.

(b) The vast majority of responses earned one mark from this question with a simple reason. Some tried to develop their answer further, but ended up repeating themselves for no extra credit, such as *'better pay so they earn more money'*, whereas '*better pay so that they are able to send remittances back to their family in their home country'* would have earned the second mark. An example also was a good way to ensure the second mark.

(c) This question was well attempted by most candidates and developed answers were often well argued showing good knowledge. A small number of responses were not focused on economic advantages and so their marks were limited. As always, reading the question carefully is very important.

Settlement dynamics

Question 3

(a) Few candidates earned the full 4 marks from this question as responses were often generic, rather than focused on the provided stimulus photograph. It is always good practice to ensure that the answer to a photo related question clearly mentions things that can be seen in the photo and then relate these things to the points made, such as '*the railway can be seen to be built on stilts, this would have been a complex construction requiring significant planning and expense.'*

(b) Generic answers like *'less pollution'* did not receive credit without clarification on the type of pollution that could have been reduced.

(c) The most common answer credited was related to discussion of the likelihood of taller buildings in a city centre. Very few referred to the relative costs of land and hence likely land use in other parts of the city. The idea of competition for land did not seem to be well embedded in candidates' understanding. Where there was evidence of a general understanding of land use in cities, it was not well applied to the question.

Section B

Population

Question 4

(a) (i) Use of the equation for dependency ratio to support their answer was a good way for candidates to craft a response that would gain all 3 marks for this question. Some answers were non-specific on the ages of the relevant groups.

(ii) In order to access all 4 marks here it was, of course, necessary to develop each of the factors that were chosen, such as *'the average age of having a first child is increasing in many countries,*

© 2025

meaning that the overall fertility might fall below replacement level, over time leading to an ageing population.'

(b) Answers to this question were largely focused on one or two potential challenges and did not consider the potential breadth of the problem. The example most often cited was Japan and there were a range of figures quoted that were not always accurate.

(c) There were some interesting responses to this question: the best answers linked all the different factors that could affect life expectancy back to economic development and used the DTM (demographic transition model) as evidence, with easy to apply examples of countries at different stages of development. Very few candidates explored the idea of inequality within countries that could have proved fruitful for more evaluative responses.

Migration

Question 5

(a) Many candidates had good knowledge to enable them to produce a thorough answer to this question. It is worthwhile noting though, that 7 marks required a number of points to be made, developed and potentially exemplified. A simple answer of *'young people migrate because… and older people might migrate because…'* is unlikely to reach the top end of marks available.

(b) There were several key terms within the question that candidates needed to be fully aware of in order to write a good answer- pull, internal and HICs. If one of those had been missed, they were unfortunately likely to write an answer that at best would gain credit at Level 1. Good responses were rare, and whilst many could name the cities from which people were moving, they were far less likely to be confident to be clear about the areas to which they were going.

(c) Again the limiting factor in many responses was not having a specific example of an area about which they could write. The answers tended to be generic or using non- specific examples like *'rural areas around New York'*. Some responses were clearly about LICs.

Settlement dynamics

Question 6

There were too few candidates attempting this question to offer meaningful comments.

© 2025

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/22
Core Human Geography

Key messages

- The mark allocation not only indicates the range of points expected but also the time that should be spent on that section. Responses consisting of two simple statements for a 4 mark question are unlikely to achieve full marks. Often candidates wrote excessively for 2 marks in **Questions 1(b)** and **2(b)**.

- The 15 mark part **(c)** in ***Section B*** is worth 25 per cent of the total marks and is often the key discriminator as it is an evaluation. Candidates should leave sufficient time to explain their ideas clearly.

- When a question asks for two aspects such as **Questions 1(b)**, **2(b)**, **3(a)**, **3(b)**, **4(a)(ii)**, **5(a)(ii)** it is unnecessary to give more than the required number. The best ideas will be marked, but additional points waste time.

- Where questions require a specific context such as LICs/MICs in **Questions 5(b) and 5(c),** answers must relate to this context. Generic answers or answers that use examples from HICs will not be able to access the full mark range.

- Candidates should be encouraged to use specific terms, and to avoid using generalised terms such as *'standard of living*' or *'infrastructure'* without clarifying what they include. Responses in **Question 2(c) were often too vague,** with no explanation, detail or exemplification to demonstrate knowledge.

- Case studies and examples are required to access the higher levels of marks in many questions. Examples should be recognisable and specific, including accurate facts which are place specific. Examples in name only, such as '*e.g. Brazil*' do not add much to an answer. Examples should be recent, from within the lifetime of the candidates. Candidates should be encouraged to include detail that clearly gives a 'sense of place' such as specific place names, location, description or statistics.

- Some responses included generalised and inaccurate statements. These should be avoided. Candidates should avoid using spurious data to support their points.

- Good case study knowledge is needed, especially in ***Section B***, but it must be appropriately applied to the question by selecting relevant information. Some candidates simply repeated everything they had memorised about an example they had studied, so some responses lacked focus.

General comments

- **Part (c)** questions in ***Section B*** always require an element of assessment or evaluation. Candidates should be aware that this requires a balanced consideration of different aspects of an issue. Many responses either have no concluding remarks or simply end their answer with a simple sentence stating that they agree with or disagree with a statement.

- Where a question asks for a comparison between two or more things for example sets of data, photographs, or different elements of a graph as in **2(a)**, candidates should avoid giving separate descriptions but should use comparative statements in which similarities or differences are clearly stated.

© 2025

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Population

Question 1

(a) (i) Although the majority of candidates answered correctly (13/1000) a significant number simply wrote '13' which does not indicate the rate.

(ii) The majority of candidates successfully identified three changes shown in the data. The best responses demonstrated effective use of both axes and supported statements with appropriate data, often summarising trends clearly, such as *'There has been an overall decrease between 1950–2020.'* In contrast, weaker responses simply quoted figures without referencing changes, for example, '*1950 death rate was 19 and in 2100 death rate was 12 per 1000.'*

(b) Most responses stated two reasons for high death rates, typically citing lack of healthcare access, disease caused by lack of clean water or proper sanitation or conflict and war. However, some candidates spent excessive time providing detailed explanations when simple reasons were sufficient for full marks. Terms such as 'poor infrastructure' and 'poverty' were frequently used but lacked clear context explaining how these factors influence death rates.

(c) Many responses revealed a misconception that falling death rates directly cause rising birth rates, explaining this by saying if people live longer, they will have more children. Some responses stated that if there are more people living there will be more births, showing a misunderstanding of the term **'**rate'.

Stronger responses clarified that birth rates remain high initially and decline later due to socio-economic changes, whereas weaker answers often used vague phrases such as *'birth rates are affected'* without explaining the nature of the impact.

Migration

Question 2

(a) The best responses accurately described the distribution as uneven or scattered and referred to groupings of countries, geographical regions and latitude. However many resorted to listing or using terms such as *'top left'* or *'bottom right'* which were not credited.

(b) The large majority of candidates were able to give two advantages and gained full marks. It should be noted that a simple one-line response for each advantage was all that was required – some responses included unnecessarily lengthy descriptions and explanations.

(c) Although most candidates were able to give simple explanations about cultural diversity, social tensions or pressure on housing, education and healthcare, few developed these points and so did not achieve full marks. Good answers gave detail or exemplification, for example diversification of cuisines and foods available in named areas. Some candidates gave economic instead of social impacts and these answers gained no marks.

Many responses expressed inaccurate, generalised and unsubstantiated comments about international migration, including claims that migrants cause congestion, pollution, disease, and crime.

Settlement dynamics

Answer

Question 3

(a) Examiners saw a range of valid answers about accessibility for people as it is close to housing, less congestion on the roads or reduced pollution from motor vehicles. However, many candidates

© 2025

were not precise enough in their use of the photograph and made general comments that could not be evidenced such as *'it enables people to get to travel to other parts of Ethiopia.'*

Candidates need to add context to comparative words such as 'cheaper', for example *'cheaper than the cost of buying and running a car'* secured a mark.

(b) Good responses included construction costs, maintenance and possible safety issues with pedestrians crossing the line. Some responses made assumptions that were not evidenced in the photograph such as *'there will be an increase in pollution'* or *'it will be too expensive for people'*.

(c) Most candidates identified the relationship between high demand and high cost, and many related this to the bid-rent theory. A significant number of responses did not consider the competition element of the question and instead wrote in general about land use types and explained why CBDs have tall buildings citing upward construction rather than addressing land values, and this limited their marks.

Section B

Population

Question 4

(a) (i) Most responses showed at least a basic understanding of the term, but some responses seemed confused and some confused fertility rate with birth rate. It is important to learn precise definitions of key terms in the syllabus.

(ii) Most candidates secured two marks, but few went on to develop their points for full marks. The best responses had clear exemplification with located examples. Some explained economic rather than social factors and these responses gained no credit.

(b) This question was generally well answered but a lack of clear exemplification limited most responses to mid-range marks. Most answers focused on the economic costs of raising children and increased number of women in formal work that delays or limits childbearing. Some candidates were not explicit enough about economic factors, and mixed social and cultural factors in their responses. Many chose to write about the levels of contraception and but did not make the link between availability and the role of government spending on healthcare and family planning which would be the economic element.

Some responses considered economic incentives and penalties designed to reduce fertility as part of government anti-natal policy. The One-Child Policy in China is a useful example, but a lengthy detailed account of other parts of this case study was unnecessary to answer this question.

(c) There were some good balanced responses which showed an understanding that the DTM is a simplified representation of a set of ideas used to explain population change over time and discussed its strengths and limitations.

However, many responses were unclear about the purpose of a model in geography, and thought of the DTM as a plan or blueprint for a government to follow. Some responses consisted of a long narrative description of each stage of the DTM and then a few simple comments about its limitations. These answers also tended to omit any examples or provide any evaluative content.

Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question 5

(a) (i) Most candidates were able to gain 2 marks by saying that this is movement of a person by their own choice, but few included the element of it being for a period of at least 1 year, or permanently.

(ii) Many answers revealed confusion between constraints (which limit or restrict movement, slowing migration, but do not stop it) and barriers, which prevent migration. Some responses ignored the word 'voluntary' and focused on issues affecting forced migration such as war or natural disasters.

© 2025

High costs and long or difficult journeys were the most common constraints given by candidates, but other good responses included the 'ties' of family responsibilities, and entry restrictions such as points systems or quotas.

(b) Most responses showed an understanding of the basic ideas. Candidates frequently cited the attraction of healthcare and education without explaining why these services are better in urban areas such as access to specialised hospitals and doctors or the range of schools, colleges and universities. Exemplification was generally weak, which limited the marks that could be achieved. Many weaker responses gave examples in name only.

The best answers were based on good case study knowledge that provided enough detail to give a clear sense of place, either from studying appropriate examples or where candidates were able to show knowledge from their own country. Some responses referred to HIC contexts which severely limited the marks achieved – candidates should practise reading and deconstructing the questions to avoid these basic errors.

(c) Most responses gave a general account of the problems caused in rural areas. Better responses gave some balance with positive impacts too: these tended to focus on the receipt of remittances and reduced pressure on land and services. There were some excellent answers that had good case study knowledge, describing specific rural areas/regions that had detail clearly based on real world example.

As in **5(b)**, many answers were generic and vague, lacking place-specific detail or supporting data and some responses referred to HIC contexts. Some responses switched between rural and urban impacts and did not focus on rural areas as the question required.

Settlement dynamics

Question 6

(a) This question was generally answered well, with candidates writing about the movement away from traditional city centre locations for high order retailing and the decline of small independent stores serving local communities to the growth of suburban shopping centres and out of town retail parks or malls. Good responses also described the effect of increased online commerce and 'click and collect' which has impacted the location of retailing.

(b) Most responses gave very general accounts of the location of manufacturing in an example city without any reference to the role of planning as the question required. Some responses used good case study knowledge to discuss zoning to separate manufacturing from other land uses, the planned development of industrial estates and the provision of infrastructure to integrate industrial areas into the wider urban area.

(c) There were some excellent responses which indicated that where this topic had been studied candidates had developed a good understanding of 'world cities' and were able to discuss criteria other than population in determining different groupings of world cities. These answers had good exemplification, mainly focusing on 'alpha + and ++' cities such as New York, London and Tokyo as well as other emerging global cities. They discussed a range of factors such as the location of the HQs of global TNCs, international financial services, communications, transport links, science and research hubs, world class universities, political power and cultural centres.

Weaker responses tended to give general descriptions of the world's biggest urban areas without focusing on the characteristics that make them world cities.

© 2025

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/23
Core Human Geography

Key messages

- The mark allocation not only indicates the range of points expected but also the time that should be spent on that section. Responses consisting of two simple statements for a 4-mark question are unlikely to achieve full marks. Often candidates wrote excessively for 2 marks in **Questions 1(b)** and **3(b)**.

- The 15 mark part **(c)** in ***Section B*** is worth 25 per cent of the total marks and is often the key discriminator as it is an evaluation. Candidates should leave sufficient time to explain their ideas clearly.

- When a question asks for two (or three) aspects such as **Questions 1(c)**, **3(b)**, **3(c)**, **5(a)(ii)** it is unnecessary to give more than the required number. The best ideas will be marked, but additional points waste time.

- Where questions require a specific context such as LICs/MICs in **Questions 5(b) and 5(c),** answers must relate to this context. Generic answers or answers that use examples from HICs will not be able to access the full mark range.

- Candidates should be encouraged to use specific terms, and to avoid using generalised terms such as 'standard of living' 'resources' or 'infrastructure' without clarifying what they include.

- Case studies and examples are required to access the higher levels of marks in many questions. Examples should be recognisable and specific, including accurate facts which are place specific. Examples in name only, such as '*e.g. Brazil'* do not add much to an answer. Candidates should be encouraged to include detail that clearly gives a 'sense of place' such as specific place names, location, description or statistics. Examples should be recent, from within the lifetime of the candidates.

- Some responses included generalised and inaccurate statements. These should be qualified. Candidates should avoid using spurious data to support their points.

- Good case study knowledge is needed, especially in ***Section B***, but it must be appropriately applied to the question by selecting relevant information. Some responses contained recognisable textbook case studies that were simply repeated without applying it to the question in hand. Some case studies referred to are clearly out of date and centres would do well to ensure that candidates have recent and relevant examples with sufficient detail to give a clear sense of place.

General comments

- **Part (c)** questions in ***Section B*** always require an element of assessment or evaluation. Candidates should be aware that this requires a balanced consideration of different aspects of an issue. Many responses either have no concluding remarks or simply end their answer with a simple sentence stating that they agree with or disagree with a statement.

- Where a question asks for a comparison between two or more things (sets of data, photographs, or different elements of a graph such as in **2(a)**, candidates should avoid giving separate descriptions but should use statements in which similarities or differences are clearly stated.

© 2025

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Population

Question 1

(a) Most responses described the positive relationship and quoted some data from the graph to illustrate this. The best answers went further and commented on the spread of healthcare expenditure at the lower end of the life expectancy range or range of expenditure for countries with a similar life expectancy.

(b) Most responses explained how birth rates are often high in countries with relatively low life expectancy and that as life expectancy improves, birth rate tends to fall.

(c) The most common responses explained the link between environmental factors such as water pollution leading to the spread of waterborne diseases such as cholera and dysentery or climate change causing prolonged droughts leading to food shortages, malnutrition and famine.

Many responses did not gain full marks because they did not include any development or exemplification. For example, *'air pollution causes higher death rates and low life expectancy'* would gain one mark whereas '*emissions from industries and traffic cause respiratory diseases which reduce life expectancy, for example in heavily polluted urban areas such as Delhi'* gained two marks.

Migration

Question 2

(a) The best responses gave clear comparative points such as *'Between 1950 and 2009 natural increase declined, from 88m to 42m, whereas net migration showed an increase from 4m to 42m in the same period.'* Weaker responses made only simple comparisons without giving any data (numbers or years) such as *'natural increase has declined but net migration has increased'.*

(b) The most commonly cited factors were employment opportunities and higher wages. Better responses used an example to develop their reason, such as *'people migrate from Bangladesh to work in the construction industry in Dubai and other Gulf states as there are many jobs available there.'* Many responses only gained one mark because they lacked any development or exemplification. Responses such as *'People migrate to HICs for a better quality of life' were too vague and gained no marks.*

(c) This question was generally answered well with candidates giving disadvantages such as the loss of labour (and in particular, skilled labour) and the possibility of GDP falling because of less spending and lower productivity amongst the remaining population. Answers that gained full marks were often those that gave a relevant example such as medical 'brain drain' with doctors moving from MICs to HICs.

Settlement dynamics

Question 3

(a) Most responses identified and described the basic pattern. Good responses went on to give more detail, identifying regions or areas of continents and data from the map, such as the highest percentages of poor housing conditions being in sub-Saharan Africa, or areas of central, south and east Asia having of 25–4.9%. Weaker answers tended to resort to listing areas and categories rather than describing patterns.

(b) Most candidates were able to give two valid answers, the most common being lack of services such as clean water supply, sanitation and electricity and the high density and overcrowded housing often made of poor quality building materials. As only two marks were available, only a

© 2025

brief description/explanation was required – some candidates wrote at length for each of the problems they described which gained no extra marks but wasted time.

(c) Most responses identified two challenges, the most commonly cited were lack of finance, and the difficulties of providing formal services and infrastructure amongst large, unplanned settlements. However, many did not gain the second mark available for each point because they gave a simple statement without any further detail or exemplification.

Section B

Population

Question 4

(a) The best answers explained the dependency ratio and then went on to describe how youthful and ageing population structures affect the dependency ratio. These were often accompanied by sketch diagram of population pyramids that supported the answer. Some responses also made valid references to the different stages of the demographic transition model.

(b) Some responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the idea of constraints in relation to sustaining population: candidates wrote about the role of war and conflict, the resources of the natural environment, climatic hazard and socio-economic factors such as poverty and economic restrictions on trade.

There were many weaker answers, with the terms 'constraint' and 'sustaining' often misunderstood. Typically these responses described the challenges of managing rapid population growth, with many writing at length about policies such as China's 'One Child' policy. Many of these responses gained little or no credit.

(c) The strongest responses assessed the relative levels of difficulty in managing under- and over-population, with the key often being the choice of examples used to evaluate the statement. Weaker responses tended to describe problems without addressing their management.

Many responses described government approaches to overpopulation, with reference to examples such as China, India and Bangladesh. Some unfocused responses simply repeated all a candidate knew about the One Child policy.

The best answers showed a good understanding of the idea of underpopulation too, giving Australia (most commonly), Canada, Mongolia and Namibia as examples. These answers explained management strategies such as pro-natal policies and encouraging in-migration of workers. An example of a high level comment was *'Australia has been able to attract both skilled professionals such as engineers and doctors and unskilled migrants to boost the workforce whereas Mongolia is not as attractive to migrants and has found this much more difficult'.*

However, it was clear that there were misconceptions over the term 'underpopulation', with many responses describing issues of ageing populations. These cited Japan, Italy and Singapore as examples of underpopulated countries and then discussed the problems of and possible management solutions to ageing populations. These answers gained no credit.

Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question 5

(a) (i) Most candidates were able to give an accurate definition of the term

(ii) Most candidates were able to state two barriers, the most common being physical barriers such as mountain ranges, seas or oceans and hard borders and legal barriers such as immigration laws. However, many answers did not develop each point with some detail or exemplification and so did not gain the second mark for each point. For example:

'Having to cross an ocean is a barrier for refugees' would gain one mark whereas *'Large bodies of water can be a barrier to refugees. The Mediterranean Sea is a barrier for refugees trying to get to Europe with many people dying trying to make the journey'* gained two marks.

© 2025

(b) Most candidates were able to explain a number of push factors, but many answers did not get beyond a simple Level 2 response because they gave very simple and vague points which either lacked exemplification or simply named a location. The best responses were based on good case study examples that showed a clear sense of place. Some candidates did not read the question properly and answered in terms of HICs or in terms of international migration.

(c) As in **5(b)**, most candidates were able to give general accounts of problems in urban areas, but comments were often vague with poor exemplification. Some candidates simply described problems without considering the possible benefits brought by migrants to cities in LIC/MICs. Again it was important to read the question carefully. Some responses discussed issues of urban growth in HIC cities.

Although the question was broader than being just about housing, some candidates included good accounts of the issues of informal settlements such as Rocinha in Rio de Janeiro, Kibera in Nairobi and Dharavi in Mumbai.

Settlement dynamics

Question 6

There were too few candidates attempting this question to offer meaningful comments.

© 2025

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/31
Advanced Physical Geography Options

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

CAMBRIDGE
International Education

© 2025

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/32
Advanced Physical Geography Options

Key messages

The main message is that candidates should read the questions very carefully, identify the specific requirements of the question and then answer accordingly. The use of specific, geographical examples was often excellent, but it needs stressing that the examples should be accurate, relevant to the question and useful for underpinning any evaluation. Specific examples of earthquake hazards, cited in **Question 8**, were sometimes inaccurate and inadequate.

General comments

All the essay questions were evaluative in some respect. The approach adopted in the answers should reflect the varying ways that the evaluative commands were phrased. Evaluation was sometimes a few general statements at the end. This was especially frequent in answers to **Question 2** where the vegetation characteristics of the two ecosystems were discussed separately with evaluation simply a few brief comments at the end. Evaluation can be sustained throughout the answers in an integrated way. It then only requires a few concluding comments at the end. Often, answers demonstrated good knowledge and understanding but this knowledge and understanding were rarely directed towards a realistic evaluation.

Candidates generally displayed a good understanding of the relevant geographical concepts. Most seemed well prepared for the examination and the quality of many of the answers was very good. Many answers were thoughtful and logical with an impressive level of detail, though care must always be taken to ensure it is relevant to the question.

Time keeping seemed excellent and there were very few rubric infringements such as answering two essay questions in an option or answering too many options.

Comments on specific questions

Tropical environments

Question 1

(a) The resource was of a nutrient cycle for a seasonally humid tropical (savanna) ecosystem. Candidates were required to describe the nutrient cycle shown. The nutrient cycle portrayed the stores and flows as well as an indication of the size of these elements. Many candidates simply described the flows without reference to the relative size of the flows and stores. Thus, they were not utilising the full information portrayed in the resource.

(b) Candidates had to explain the nutrient cycle shown in the resource. Many candidates forgot or ignored that it was a nutrient cycle for a seasonally humid tropical (savanna) ecosystem. The nutrient cycle needed explaining with reference as to how the climatic and vegetation characteristics of such an ecosystem influenced the nutrient cycle. Explanations were often generic and could have applied to any ecosystem.

Question 2

This was the more popular of the two essay questions in this option. There were some excellent answers with sustained evaluation throughout rather than producing two separate answers on the vegetation characteristics with a few concluding statements at the end. Knowledge of individual vegetation species was

© 2025

often impressive, especially with respect to seasonally humid tropical (savanna) vegetation. Some candidates agreed with the statement, some candidates disagreed and other candidates concluded that the variation in both ecosystems was large and that neither variation was the greatest. The overall response to this question was generally good. However, there was a tendency to treat the savanna ecosystem as a single entity. Very few candidates noted the transition from savanna woodland to tree savanna, shrub savanna and then savanna grassland. There was also a tendency to stray into semi-arid ecosystems.

Question 3

There were few answers to this question and it is difficult to make general comments. Overall, it was not answered well. Candidates often described the general climatic characteristics of the two environments rather than focus on the specific requirements of the question. Discussion of diurnal variations in temperature was limited with limited knowledge of the scale of the variations in the two ecosystems.

Coastal environments

Question 4

(a) The resource was a photograph of a coastal landscape. Candidates were asked to describe the characteristics of four physical features of the coastal landscape. The emphasis was on description not simply identification. Thus, the identification of a stack, stump or wave-cut platform without some descriptive element was not sufficient. However, most candidates were able to obtain good marks. As in similar questions in the past, some candidates described features that they thought should have been present.

(b) Most candidates were able to identify the landform to be explained as a stack and most were aware of the sequence from cave formation to arch and then stacks or stumps. The differentiation of answers was based on the detail provided with respect to the operation of processes, marine and sub-aerial. The role of wave refraction was mentioned rarely as was the possible development of a cave on both sides of a headland. A significant proportion of candidates explained the sequence in terms of hard and soft rock which was inappropriate and would not lead to the formation of a stack.

Question 5

There were few answers to this question and overall there were few good answers. The main weakness in answers was the lack of specific detail about the cross-section (profile) and plan of beaches. There was often a lack of understanding of swash processes, and the interaction of swash and backwash was rarely mentioned. Longshore drift was sometimes discussed but with little reference to the form of beaches. Some candidates strayed into discussing concordant and discordant coastlines and the evolution of cliffs. The question was an evaluation as to whether swash processes were the main influence on the beaches. Thus, it was an opportunity to discuss other factors that might influence the form of beaches to substantiate the evaluation but this was often lacking.

Question 6

This was the more popular of the two essay questions in this option and there were many excellent answers. Examples of management strategies were widespread and included a number of interesting examples from coral reefs around the world. The key to a good answer was the link between the threats and the management strategies. Some candidates attempted to discuss management strategies without sufficient detail on the threats that were being addressed.

Hazardous environments

Question 7

(a) This question was answered well with many candidates being able to score three or four marks. There needed to be some data extracted from the resource to obtain four marks. Most of the points mentioned in the mark scheme were covered in total.

(b) The main problem in answers to this question was in the detail provided. It was not sufficient to simply state that seismometers could be used. It was necessary to explain what the seismometers were measuring and how this suggested a volcanic eruption was imminent. The same was

© 2025

expected with respect to answers mentioning gas sensors. The measurement of surface changes was also frequently mentioned. Weaker responses mentioned the behaviour of animals as predictors. Also, hazard mapping does not allow predictions to be made and an examination of past records cannot really predict a volcanic eruption.

Question 8

This was the more popular of the two essay questions in this option. There were some excellent answers to this question but a significant number of candidates answered the question with little discussion as to the nature of tsunamis. Some answers were generic with no examples mentioned which made assessment difficult. There was often inaccuracy in some of the specific detail, with tsunamis often mentioned in reference to specific earthquakes when they did not occur. The range of other hazards discussed, as a basis for the evaluation, was often impressive but frequently ground shaking and damage to infrastructure was ignored. Understanding of the process of soil liquefaction was limited. Also, quite a few candidates considered volcanic eruptions as being a major hazard from earthquakes. However, as noted, it was a popular question and in general answers were detailed and accurate.

Question 9

The main issue with answers to this question concerned the choice of hazardous environment. The case study chosen was often too restrictive to be able to provide the full scope for analysis, for example the choice of a specific volcanic eruption or mass movement event. In the latter case the choice of Hong Kong was appropriate because of the frequency and variation in the mass movement events. The choice of the Vajont Dam event was not really appropriate because it was a one-off event and the result of human mismanagement not because it was a hazardous environment. Some candidates used more than one case study which diluted the evaluation that they were trying to make. It was encouraging to see that many case studies were of multi-hazard environments such as the Philippines.

Hot arid and semi-arid environments

Question 10

(a) This was answered well by many candidates with most of the points in the mark scheme mentioned. Many candidates scored full marks. However, some candidates interpreted the data as referring to precipitation rather than precipitation anomalies.

(b) Answers to this question were generally weaker. Many candidates did not understand what desertification was or how it developed. There was very little about land degradation in general with many thinking it was simply the spread of deserts. The wilting and drying up of vegetation were discussed but this was not followed by an explanation of how this led to land degradation and desertification apart from a brief mention of the possibility of increased soil erosion.

Question 11

This was the more popular of the two essay questions in this option. There were some good responses that managed to disentangle and assess the relative influence of temperature and water deficit on plant adaptation with impressive specific examples, but many answers were too generalised, and it was not clear to what the plant characteristics were adapted. Some candidates also assessed plant adaptations to factors other than climate such as problem soils, especially salinisation, and the possible effect of predators.

Question 12

Most candidates were able to obtain reasonable marks by analysing the range of landforms found in hot arid and semi-arid environments although the assessment of the extent to which erosion by water action was responsible was often minimal. Many candidates seemed to have misread the question and answered with respect to water action in general rather than erosion by water action. Answers to this question were often characterised by the comment at the beginning of this report, such that the range of landforms and processes were discussed but the assessment was simply a few brief words at the end.

© 2025

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/33
Advanced Physical Geography Options

General comments

Overall, this paper seemed to cause a few problems for candidates. Some candidates met the demands of the questions very well but there were a large number of responses that only partially answered the question, providing either unbalanced or incomplete arguments. Quite often the evaluative essays just became a description of factors with no real assessment of the question itself. For example, **Question 6** was frequently a list of hard engineering structures with little assessment about how effective they were at managing problems. Whilst this will have gained some credit it showed many candidates were not focusing in on the precise demands of the question. Some candidates also automatically agreed with a statement given without really arguing their case for why they thought that.

In other cases, there was a lack of specific knowledge when applying examples accurately. Sometimes only the name of a country was given which does not really help in answering the question. Detailed and precise knowledge of located examples is a key to success. This was particularly true again in **Question 6**, where often generic problems and solutions were identified without precise case study detail.

The best essay answers, those with sustained evaluation, were the ones that gave value judgements throughout the answer, rather than just in the conclusion. This allowed candidates to focus on the specific demands of the question as they would be constantly referring back to it in their answer.

Comments on specific questions

Tropical environments

Question 1

(a) Most candidates were able to answer this question effectively. There was occasional misinterpretation of the map. The most common misconception was that the white areas contained undisturbed tree cover, whereas the key indicated that these are the green areas. Most candidates were able to give four points for four marks, using both compass points and the names of the settlements to describe the distribution.

(b) This was a reasonably well answered question where candidates were asked to explain how the loss of tree cover affected the nutrient cycle in tropical rainforest ecosystems. The use of Gersmehl diagrams was very useful here as they gave a visual indication of the effect of tree cover loss. The best answers were the ones that were able to explain each of the processes occurring in detail, and how these processes changed. Soil erosion, leaching and decomposition were all mentioned to a greater or lesser extent but the key to answering this question well was showing a detailed understanding of each process and how tree cover loss would affect it.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to discuss how far they agreed with a statement about the effect of human activity on savanna versus rainforest plant communities. Several candidates answered this with respect to the whole ecosystem, and so often went off the point by discussing impacts on animals and humans as well. The question was asking only about the plant communities and so these candidates were not answering the question. The main focus should have been comparing the effects of human activities, but the best answers identified that often the issues were different between each of these areas. With a discussion question such as this there is no right answer, but the candidate does need to support their argument with evidence, and the best answers did this through the use of specific case studies.

© 2025

Question 3

This was the more popular of the two essay questions in this option and there were a range of answers. Many candidates did not focus enough on the most important part to assess, which was the granite landforms themselves. The question asked candidates to assess the importance of deep weathering on these landforms and whilst some candidates knew a range of landforms, others wrote rather vague descriptions of granite weathering. The best answers assessed a range of landforms and tried to identify why they were different. This meant identifying a range of other factors such as etchplanation, the role of surface weathering and climate. Some candidates were able to do this extremely well whilst others wrote a rather descriptive account of the general features of granite.

Coastal environments

Question 4

(a) The first part of **Question 4**, a description of the photograph, was reasonably well done. Description of photographs is best done by being precise about 'where' in the photograph the feature is found and then some adjective to give it description. In this case the descriptions could have mentioned the size and shape of the sand dunes, the colour of the sand in different areas, the presence of water, the size and location of vegetation and perhaps the presence of climax vegetation in the background of the photograph. A few candidates tried to explain the presence and type of vegetation, but this was not within the demands of the question.

(b) The second part of the question required candidates to explain the formation of coastal sand dunes, but it was not completely answered. Many candidates were able to get some credit by writing about aeolian processes but there was a lack of linkage between the conditions required (wide sandy beach, onshore winds, sheltered from storms, etc.) and the way in which sand dunes formed. Many candidates understood the role of pioneer species but often did not go further than noting that they stabilised dunes and trapped sediment. Few candidates wrote about how soil developed from decomposing organic matter. A minority of candidates also seemed to get confused with longshore drift and made no mention to the role of wind in transporting the sediment.

Question 5

This question in general was not very well answered. Many candidates simply described the formation of the cave/arch/stack sequence without comparing the importance of different processes within this sequence and concluded wave energy was the most important without considering any other processes. This question required candidates to assess the statement and make a judgement as to whether wave energy or other factors, such as wave refraction, rock type and structure, weathering and mass movements are the most important factor. The best answers compared the influence of each of these factors and considered that certain factors may be more important at different stages. For example, weathering could be more important in the creation of the arch as the wave energy may not reach up high enough to erode the arch itself.

Question 6

This was the more popular of the two essay questions in this option. Candidates needed to identify problems to be managed by hard engineering and there were a variety of case studies used from around the world. Some candidates simply named a country which was not specific enough. Better answers had detail about specific locations and were able to name places, the strategies used and could evaluate the success of strategies. In some answers sketch maps were drawn to illustrate the points being made. Some candidates chose the option of comparing two stretches of coastline where there had been a success and a failure of hard engineering, whilst others chose to compare hard engineering with soft engineering. Each approach was valid but the key to this question was identifying whether the problems had been solved or not. In some cases, candidates simply wrote what they knew about a stretch of coastline without really assessing how successful hard engineering had been. Answers that were descriptive like this remained in Level 1 or 2.

Hazardous environments

Question 7

(a) This question required candidates to describe the distribution of both magnitude and frequency of the earthquakes shown on the graph. Most candidates were able to do this, and many were able to

© 2025

make four descriptive points and gain full marks. Overall, this question caused few problems, although some candidates did try to explain the distribution which was unnecessary.

(b) The second part of this question was generally not well answered as many candidates made generic comments about magnitude and frequency. The best answers made the connection between the amount of damage caused and the magnitude or frequency and were able to explain that other factors may also have an effect, such as level of development, time of day, population density, etc. Magnitude was better understood than frequency, and some candidates misinterpreted frequency to mean how long an earthquake occurred for. Several candidates also tried to apply this question to Fig. 7.1, which was difficult as the magnitude of the earthquakes shown are relatively small.

Question 8

This was the most popular essay question in the paper and there were a broad range of answers. Most candidates were aware of what hazard maps are but there were varying degrees of understanding of how they are used. A few candidates misinterpreted the question by discussing the role of hazard maps for all hazards and so scored low marks, as only the section on mass movements would have been relevant. Some candidates also gave very generic answers without the use of examples. It is very difficult to access the highest marks without using examples to support an argument. The best answers understood the importance of hazard mapping as a starting point for most other methods of management and explained that it did not actually prevent the hazard but simply identified where mass movements were likely to take place so that other management strategies could be implemented.

Question 9

This was the much less popular essay question in this option and was often not very well answered. Several candidates gave a description of the impacts of particular hurricane events without really addressing the question set. Better answers showed an understanding of the role of sea-surface temperature and compared that to other factors that affected both the formation and development of large-scale atmospheric disturbances (cyclones, hurricanes, typhoons). Most candidates were able to make some basic points about the location and direction of travel but overall they did not assess the relative importance of sea-surface temperature in comparison to the Coriolis effect for example. Knowledge of how a large-scale atmospheric disturbance (cyclone, hurricane, typhoon) formed was generally weak and the development of them was rarely covered.

Hot arid and semi-arid environments

Question 10

(a) This was the least popular option with only a small number of candidates attempting these questions. The first question was a map question and candidates were able to describe the global distribution of hot semi-arid environments successfully. There were occasional attempts to explain the global distribution but generally this was a well answered question.

(b) This question was less well done as several candidates seemed determined on describing it as arid rather than semi-arid. As a result, they did not include the influence of the ITCZ in their answer which is an extremely important reason for why this area is semi-arid rather than arid. However, more successful candidates were able to explain the role of the ITCZ, as well as other factors such as the descending limb of the Hadley cell and continentality.

Question 11

Too few candidates answered this question to be able to give meaningful comments in this report.

Question 12

This question was reasonably well answered with most candidates having an understanding that wind was probably not the main cause of desertification, but it did play a role. Other factors were often included in the assessment of the statement, including overgrazing, over-cultivation and deforestation for fuelwood/timber. There were a few examples/case studies given but the detail on these was often not particularly well-developed. Overall, candidates argued that human activity was a greater cause of desertification. A few candidates misread this question as one about the creation of arid areas and so went off-topic to write about

© 2025

the descending limb of the Hadley cell, continentality and cold ocean currents which are causes of aridity rather than desertification.

© 2025

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/41
Advanced Human Geography Options

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

CAMBRIDGE
International Education

© 2025

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/42
Advanced Human Geography Options

Key messages

1. Responses to both parts of the structured questions: **1**, **4**, **7** and **10** were generally weak. For **part (a)** questions, comment on the overall pattern of the data should be encouraged. **Questions 1(a)**, and **4(a)**, both directly had the command describe the distribution and compare the distribution, whilst **Questions 7(a)** and **10** were related to distribution, with **7(a)** stating compare the contribution and **10(a)**, describe the spatial organisation. For distributions, candidates should analyse the data to see if the distribution is even or uneven, concentrated or dispersed, clustered or random.

2. All the **part (b)** questions in this paper had the same command 'explain two…' but there was another part to the question which must be explained, e.g. in **Question 4(b)** the question states: explain two reasons why some countries rely on the use of fossil fuels. It does not just ask why countries use fossil fuels. The key part not answered in most cases was why countries rely on the use of fossil fuels.

3. Good geography uses a framework: where (with a clear description of the location), what is happening, why is it happening, who is involved, are there benefits or problems, do these become issues, is it sustainable, what is being done to manage the area. All of the questions require support examples and for case study questions such as **2**, **9** and **12**, specific details for one country (**Questions 2** and **12)** and one area or resort (**Question 9)** were required.

General comments

For essays, not answering the question is a problem. Candidates need to deconstruct the question and planning of a response is important based on this. Evaluation was frequently very simplistic and often repetitive; planning would assist the candidate to separate factors which are common or those which are more specific. Any evaluative judgement needs to be supported by evidence if it is to achieve at the higher levels.

In many cases where the question required a specific focus on sustainability the definition was valid, but quite narrow: sustainability is meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The candidates might extend this to consider the three pillars or use the acronym 'SEE' social, economic, environmental aspects of sustainability.

Comments on specific questions

Production, location and change

Question 1

(a) Candidates should have noted that the distribution of land use types is not even. It is dominated by plantation uses and within this type biofuels are the largest. This might have been expressed in other ways such as plantations are by far the largest or are the majority land use type. Further comment on the order of the other three land use types was creditable, e.g. industrial commodities is second to plantation, whilst climate and urban development are similar and comment on the size of individual types such as the largest individual type is biofuels and the largest non-plantation type is conservation and climate mitigation.

© 2025

Some candidates mistakenly thought that the graph was a map and described the location of the land use types and others mistakenly thought that 'conservation and climate mitigation' was the smallest type as it has only one sector of the graph.

(b) Candidates were required to explain two political factors that influence agricultural land use and practices on farms. Better responses explained the link between the political factor and the effect on either land use or a specific agricultural practice. For example, a government policy to increase export revenue would lead to more cash crop farming, with support for activities on the farm and in either storage, collection or movement of crops in sound condition to the ports. Some responses offered more than two political factors or on occasion the factor was unclear or changed into another factor.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to use a case study of one country to evaluate the success of attempts to manage agricultural change. Countries frequently used included: Kazakhstan, Jamaica, India and Zimbabwe, with some examples of Kenya or Eswatini. Most of the attempts were attributed to government policies but this was often very generic and simplistic, e.g. governments give subsidies, give seed and chemicals, give machinery or basic reference to land reform. Many responses comprised a named country without details which would distinguish that country from any other going through the same changes in agriculture or lacking any located areas of agricultural production. Attempts to manage agricultural change were also frequently very dated and lack relevance to the current challenges for agriculture and lack relevance to the candidates themselves. Examples include the virgin land programme in Kazakhstan, which was named only and lacked details about the purpose, the record of production success or not and the specific challenges the programme faced. An alternative used was the 'Green Revolution' under the name of India but focused on the 1960s and again without specific support for named regions with details about the approach in that region, why it was needed, who did what and how successful it was. One common challenge for agriculture globally is the response to climate change and building resilience and overcoming new issues of food security.

Better responses were well founded with specific details about attempts to manage agricultural change with place support for named, located areas within the country. These responses were also able to evaluate the success of each attempt to manage agricultural change and to broadly evaluate the success and discuss reasons for success and reasons which hinder success. Evaluations could have been developed in several ways. For example, using success criteria such as increased production, higher incomes, greater exports, reduced rural depopulation, acceptance by communities/producers, overcoming environmental problems, or political will. Other ways of evaluating include how far the reason for the agricultural change was overcome, identifying the remaining issues and variations according to scale of enterprise, spatial differences, impact for different groups.

Question 3

The key area which differentiated the quality of responses in this question was the link to location broadly and to specific types and locations of manufacturing industries.

The question required candidates to assess the extent to which technology is the most important factor affecting the location of manufacturing and related service industry. Most candidates know how technology can reduce labour costs through various aspects of traditional mechanisation and more recent changes to automated production methods and replacement of labour by robotics. The influence of technology on other factors of location was less well understood such as reducing transport costs of materials and products.

Many candidates included little about technology and more commonly moved to other factors such as materials, energy, markets, government policy or less commonly land, labour, capital, economies and diseconomies of scale, and inertia. However, the influence of these factors on location broadly or through specific examples was limited.

Better responses had a reasonable coverage of technology, with comment on how technology can loosen ties set by other factors, coverage of some other factors, specific examples of types and/or located examples and an evaluation which presented an argument as to how important technology is in relation to these other factors.

© 2025

Question 4

(a) Candidates were required to compare the distribution of carbon capture and storage facilities at two stages: 'operational and under construction' versus 'planned'. The main point here is that the distribution for the five named regions and the 'Rest of World' is clearly uneven or is concentrated for both stages: North America and Europe dominate overall but North America for 'operational and under construction' and Europe for 'planned.' Further credit was awarded for recognition that Europe though dominant in 'planned' is lowest or joint lowest with China for 'operational and under construction'. Credit was also awarded for comment on the ubiquity of each stage and the relative size of each overall, e.g. 'operational and under construction' are found in every region but 'planned' is in all regions apart from the 'Rest of World' and comment that all regions have more 'planned' capacity than 'operational and under construction' except 'Rest of World'.

Some candidates did not know how to read a stacked bar graph. Some for instance thought that the 'operational and under construction' included all of the height of the bar, including the 'planned' which was below.

(b) The explanation here was linked to 'why some countries rely on the use of fossil fuels' and not just 'why some countries use fossil fuels'. The idea of 'rely' or 'reliance' was important to better responses. The reliance might be a result of factors related to existing fossil fuel use such as high fossil fuel endowment, infrastructure based on fossil fuel use and distribution, or factors related to reasons why changing to renewables or nuclear would be problematic. Terms such as cheap, easy to extract, easy to use need explanation. This explanation might involve using a combination of factors such as coal is cheap because of its relative abundance compared to other fossil fuels, so in countries with a high endowment of coal there is mining expertise and infrastructure to make use of the coal and where imports are needed the market demand is not as high as for oil or gas.

Question 5

Candidates were asked to assess the extent to which they agreed that hydroelectric power (HEP) offers a sustainable solution for issues in energy production. Better responses focused on HEP, using accurate data for specific schemes such as Kariba, Three Gorges, Ulla-Forre and contextualised the broader role of HEP in the energy mix of specific countries. These responses were also linked clearly to specific issues in energy production and considered how far HEP is a sustainable solution to these issues. Some candidates looked at wind and solar as other examples of renewable sources of energy production or fossil fuels and nuclear as large producers of energy. In terms of deconstructing a question, the most important aspect here was to consider issues of energy production with links to how far HEP (and other sources) are a sustainable solution to these issues.

Question 6

The question asked candidates to consider how far environments at risk can be protected by effective management. Most responses used one or more specific examples and described the risks, followed by a description of attempts to manage the environment with simple comment on the success or not. The latter frequently involved a repeat of similar factors in the other example(s). Like **Question 5**, better responses deconstructed the question and discussed the factors which lead to effective management and those which work against management and were well founded with specific details including a description of the environment, the risks and details of attempt(s) to manage the environment. Rural and urban examples were used and varied in scale from the 'green wall' in either China or the Sahel, Delhi, Pear River Delta, Harare or a small community-based project.

Question 7

(a) This was a comparison question like **Question 4(a)** but focusing on tourism's contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) of three countries. The similarity was that candidates should have considered how far there is an even contribution from each component to the GDP. Again, there were clear differences: Jamaica and Thailand with 'other' dominating the GDP whilst for Maldives there is a different spread, with both tourism contributions being similar and the 'other' being the smallest.

(b) Candidates were required to explain two impacts of the tourism multiplier effect. Many candidates only had a limited view of the concept, being restricted to direct spending by tourists and omitting spending by tourist businesses with their suppliers and the spending of employees within the local

© 2025

economy. Better responses demonstrated an understanding that the tourism multiplier effect is more than just an increase in tourist numbers. The weaker responses described impacts which related to negative impacts of increased or high tourist numbers alone.

Question 8

The question required candidates to assess the extent to which international debt is a problem for some countries. A question requiring knowledge of international debt, the problems it may cause and an evaluative element, assessing either which aspect of international debt is more of a problem than others and consideration of why international debt may be more of a problem to some countries than others. Most candidates argued simply that it is less of a problem for lenders than borrowers. They also argued that there are more problems and sometimes severe problems when the borrowing does not fulfil its purpose. Argument as to why was largely confined to corruption and the creation of odious debt. Some responses argued that high interest rates are part of the cause of problems of debt repayment, but few could explain why the interest rates might be high. They might consider the fact that many countries borrow in their own currency, e.g. dollars or pounds, whilst others suffer from having to repay in these currencies. So, whilst the value of the lending countries currency appreciates, at the same time debt and ensuing issues reduce the value of the borrowing countries' currencies. Well learnt and up-to-date examples such as Sri Lanka, Zambia and Argentina worked well. Some responses argued successfully that the problems might be more severe for some groups within society than others, especially where a country spends a significant portion of its national budget on debt repayments creating a vicious circle of debt. Understanding of how debt relief and debt cancellation work could be improved.

Question 9

The question was based on a case study of one tourist area or resort with a demand to evaluate the issues of sustainability it faces. This requires detailed knowledge and exemplification for a valid tourist area or resort, to move the response higher than a generic maximum of 8 marks. Many responses did not have this support. To simply name an area or resort was not enough, whilst others used a named country such as Jamaica which is too large for this case study. For a response based on Jamaica, there needed to be a focus on a defined area, e.g. Montego Bay, with specific details of the issues of sustainability in the area. The issues of sustainability could be social, economic or environmental and might be an issue for host communities, visitors, the tourism industry or the environment and could be at any stage in the growth and development of the chosen location. The evaluation might have considered which issues are the most important, how the issues affect different groups, the extent to which the issues have changed overtime and the extent to which they can or have been managed.

Question 10

(a) Many candidates often misunderstand the concept of spatial organisation. It closely resembles distribution, as shown on the map. Better responses noted that overall, the operations of the transnational corporation (TNC) are not evenly spread, there is a concentration of activities in Asia and there is a presence in all continents. The operations are also sometimes clustered, e.g. in East and Southeast Africa or South America and sometimes in isolated countries such as in West Africa.

(b) Candidates were required to explain two benefits to transnational corporations (TNCs) of outsourcing their manufacturing. Better responses explained the benefits to TNCs of contracting manufacturing to companies other than themselves.

Question 11

This question required knowledge about the factors which have enabled or are enabling countries to become newly industrialised countries (NICs). Candidates could use detailed knowledge of at least one NIC and/or use a synthesis of the factors which NICs have in common. Better responses used specific examples of countries with economic development increasing rapidly through manufacturing. They were able to identify the factors and justify which were the most important. This might have included consideration of how factors link together and the extent to which they have changed between the emergence and growth stages. Generally, responses were not well founded, examples were dated and the coverage of factors partial.

Question 12

This question required knowledge of regional disparities and attempts to overcome regional disparities for one country. Most candidates considered core and periphery with the most frequently seen examples using

© 2025

Zimbabwe and using urban/rural differences. Better responses were well founded with a description of the regional inequality and of specific attempts to overcome the disparities. For the responses using a rural/urban framework, better responses used named and located examples for the attempts and in the evaluation. These better responses also clearly evaluated each attempt and evaluated the extent to which the attempts overall have led to reduced regional disparity or whether the gap between some regions has widened. Less successful evaluations described each attempt and used the same ideas as to why each attempt had worked or (mostly seen) had not worked. Planning of a response might have enabled a candidate to separate these common factors, for example corruption and lack of capital.

© 2025

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/43
Advanced Human Geography Options

Key messages

1. For **part (a)** questions, when asked to 'compare' candidates should use qualifying language, such as more, most, greatest, least, highest, etc. The use of data is also important, and accuracy is needed, but if data is simply stated without comparative language, then the command is not being met. Candidates also need to practice noticing patterns and anomalies.

2. For **part (b)** questions, there was a lack of depth to the explanations. Some candidates wrote one or two brief sentences of explanation for the points they were making. Sometimes an example was included, but without much development of the context beyond simply naming the example. At this level candidates need to be reminded and encouraged to write full paragraphs of explanation, fully showing their knowledge and understanding of the topic, embedding geographical terminology and examples throughout. If two factors are required, two full paragraphs should be written.

3. For essay questions, candidates who plan out essays continue to do better than those who do not. Introductions to essays should be brief and ideally have evaluative comment. Essays always need to be based on real life examples and whenever possible should include theories and concepts related to the topic.

General comments

There were some candidates who wrote very little, or used listing, which should be discouraged. Some candidates also missed out compulsory questions or answered too many. Overall, candidates need to practice essay writing and developing this skill to improve their marks. Cambridge International Education provides examples of well written candidate essays from past exam series which could be used within lessons to support candidates in understanding the standard expected of them, and to aid their revision and practice.

Comments on specific questions

Production, location and change

Question 1

(a) Too few candidates answered this question to be able to give meaningful comments in this report.

(b) Too few candidates answered this question to be able to give meaningful comments in this report.

Question 2

Too few candidates answered this question to be able to give meaningful comments in this report.

Question 3

Too few candidates answered this question to be able to give meaningful comments in this report.

© 2025

Environmental management

Question 4

(a) The command 'compare the growth' was generally understood. However, a few candidates simply described each bar of the graph. When this happens, they are not comparing, they are describing the growth and receive no marks. To get full marks, candidates needed to notice similarities/patterns and differences/anomalies in the growth amounts. The type of biofuel being used could also be compared. Many candidates incorrectly stated that India had the lowest growth amount, when in fact this was the USA once the negative maize growth was subtracted from the total.

(b) There was a limited breadth of knowledge shown about biofuels in general, and the main message for centres about this question is to ensure that candidates are aware of the use of biofuels, and why they are increasing in use. Knowledge of both issues and benefits should be taught to explain the trends. Many of the answers remained in Level 2 as candidates did not explain fully or develop their answers with examples.

Question 5

Many candidates had some understanding of nuclear disasters (Chernobyl and Fukushima featured here) but limited knowledge about the energy source beyond that. Some knew about issues with waste, weapons development and cost. Therefore, essays tended to lack depth due to a lack of knowledge, and the ensuing assessment was also limited. Candidates should have based their essays on issues in energy production, and therefore how nuclear does (or does not) address these issues was crucial for Level 3 and above. Many candidates focused on other sustainable solutions, which could be relevant, but only when assessed against nuclear. Teachers should remind candidates that their essays should focus on the factor, or in this case the energy type, included in the question. A significant number of candidates wrote about the Three Gorges Dam with little relevance to the question set. Candidates need to ensure they understand the demands of the question they choose, and they must have relevant examples.

Question 6

Candidates struggled to structure good essays for this question and some lacked clear assessment. The focus of the essay should have been the reasons why some locations are easier to improve, applied to urban and rural contexts. Many wrote a paragraph explaining the degradation of an urban area, followed by a paragraph explaining the degradation of a rural area, with a conclusion as to the reasons why they were different. This approach would receive top of Level 2 or bottom of Level 3 depending on the quality of the conclusion. Better essays took the approach of focusing and developing the reasons which make the examples chosen difficult to improve and then developed the assessment of the extent to which these reasons exist in urban and/or rural environments. Some candidates confused urban and rural areas, or chose rivers for their rural area, but then mentioned industrial pollution or high population density as reasons for the river degradation. Better examples were those with a defined area, such as a city or province. Rural areas which cover vast areas of land with a similar biome are acceptable as examples, although locational context of region names is always helpful. Examples chosen included New Delhi, Beijing, Queenstown (New Zealand), Rotorua (New Zealand) and Namibia.

Global interdependence

Question 7

(a) This question was generally answered well, although some candidates only did a basic comparison of the exports compared to each other. At this level, candidates should be able to do more than this and notice significant differences or where there are similarities and include these in their answers to avoid simplistic analysis. The main difference was that identified as a reserve mark in the mark scheme because it was so significant.

(b) Many candidates did not know recent developments in types of tourism. Instead, they wrote about developments within the tourism industry such as transport, resort development, use of technology, advertising, etc. Types of tourism should be taught as part of the syllabus, and candidates should explore the reasons for the growth in different types, for example medical tourism. Where types were present, understanding about the reasons for growth was weak. Many candidates just simply described what the type was, without an explanation of why it had developed.

© 2025

Question 8

This question was reasonably well answered. Candidates tended to know about issues of aid dependency and misuse of funds and then would give balance of the positives. Better essays were full of evidence from many different countries to back up the points being made. Additionally, better responses would compare different types of aid, and how when the aims are different, the impacts can and should also be judged differently too. Examples chosen included Haiti, Botswana and Uganda.

Question 9

Scale remains an issue when choosing a tourist area or resort for the case study. Centres need to note that candidates who use Jamaica or Bali should include specific resorts within these places. It was acceptable in this question to include the national scale economy, but the focus should be on the economic impacts on the tourist area or resort. There were some excellent local examples, such as Queenstown in New Zealand, and some less appropriate ones, such as Blackpool UK which is quite a dated case study. Ubud in Bali is another resort which has seen significant impacts from mass tourism. Links to the Butler model could be made, but those candidates who tried to frame their answer around the stages of this model often tended to stray into social and environmental impacts. Some essays missed the focus on the economic impacts that was needed, instead discussing social or environmental impacts. These impacts are only relevant when assessed against the economy or when a clear link is made, e.g. environmental degradation requires capital to restore the environment.

Economic transition

Question 10

(a) Candidates generally did well describing where the numbers were high or low and grouping countries within world regions. Many candidates scored at least two marks.

(b) To get out of Level 1, candidates needed to use services as the economic sector that has been moved to another country, not manufacturing. Therefore, many reasonable answers remained in Level 1 because the exemplification was done using secondary industry. Some of the benefits are the same regardless of the economic sector, however, without a clear reference to services, answers were not focused on the demands of this question.

Question 11

This was not a popular question, but candidates that did answer tended to focus on the role of government relatively well. Other factors would be present to aid the overall assessment, but the different aspects of the government's role should have been the focus. Examples chosen included Malaysia, India and China.

Question 12

Candidates needed to consider the causes of the regional disparity and evaluate their importance. Most candidates approached this question by discussing the causes paragraph-by-paragraph with evaluative comment of the importance included. Many candidates used Brazil for their case study which worked well for this question. It would have been good to see candidates using the theories of regional disparity to underpin their responses, but this was not seen often.

© 2025